Max Horkheimer's concept of 'suffering'

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2014

> 'The capitalist system in its present phase is organized exploitation on a world-wide scale. Its preservation creates boundless suffering. This society certainly has available the human and technical means to abolish the most blatant forms of physical wretchedness.'[1]

1. Introduction

These words by Max Horkheimer (some ninety years ago), seem as pertinent today (also for South Africa) as they were for Germany in the mid-1920s. The above epigraph forms the basis for this article for it is certainly an indictment (as they were then) for today's prevailing socio-economic and politically highly industrialised capitalist world which still operates at the expense of the relative depravation of the geo-political Other. This reality reflects our inability to eradicate all forms of modern-day suffering. Although Horkheimer warned that '[m]en of good will want to draw conclusions for political action from the critical theory …'[2] the function and relevance of Critical Theory for this study is certainly not a '… [t]houghtless and dogmatic application of the critical theory to practice in changed historical circumstances….'[3] Any research should be well aware of the inherent dangers of transposing the realities of one era onto another but the fine line of nevertheless having to take note of the past, cannot be neglected.

Most of Horkheimer's writings make direct or indirect reference (in one form or another) to human suffering. For instance, Rolf Wiggerhaus wrote that Horkheimer '… treat categories such as kindness and pity in the way that Adorno himself treated theological motifs: to suspend them and only let them appear implicitly.'[4] Parenthetically, my contention is that this also holds true for how Horkheimer

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[1] Horkheimer, M. 'A Premium Placed on Vileness', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.28.

[2] Horkheimer, M. 'Preface', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.(v).

[3] Ibid. See also Engelbrecht, C. 'Limitations in History. Part 1. The Problems With Historical Facts.' <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> 7 June 2013, pp.1-12; Engelbrecht, C. 'Limitations in History. Part II. Theory and Eastern Cape Historical Research.' <http://independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers> 26 June 2012, pp.1-12.

[4] Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.268.

viewed and presented his nuances of suffering. For instance, the most obvious and direct form is *physical* suffering – the result of injustices in a complex world of insecure human existence. This is different from *psychic* suffering that functions in the realm of human personality[5] or psyche. The complexities of modern life reflect a clear theme in practically all Horkheimer's writings, namely, that the current epoch is regressing despite the so-called 'advancements' (progress) of science, technology, commerce and politics. In fact, they are, paradoxically, considered as (some of the) threats to human freedom of a civilization that is falling into and experiencing all sorts of barbarism. As a side comment, no attention was paid to Horkheimer's references to 'scientific' laboratory tests on humans or animals in the name of 'progress.'

Although suffering as a human (and animal) phenomenon was never Horkheimer's direct focus of study, he, together with Adorno, did '… want to explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism.'[6] Such regression into a previously lower level of human existence is the result of domination in one form or another – not only of man over others, but also of nature. About a decade later, in 1956, during a discussion with Adorno, Horkheimer still believed that the '… possibility of regression is always there.'[7] A few years later (between 1961 and 1962) Horkheimer wrote that '[s]uffering is eternal.'[8] But, already some three decades earlier, Horkheimer wrote that '… history has never ceased till now to be a record of struggles.'[9] Therefore, suffering for Horkheimer, became in our view, a philosophical category.

Since Horkheimer's writings reveal different shades of all kinds of suffering, the objective of this article is to follow the idea/s of suffering in Horkheimer's most important published (English) writings. But first, we need to give a general overview of the conception of suffering. Finally (and needless to say), the conclusion will indicate that suffering is more than a physical or mental nature. Instead, suffering is a form of *attunement* to the world[10] that represents a specific set of human

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[5] Horkheimer, M. 'The Concept of Man', in Horkheimer, M. *Critique of Instrumental Reason. Lectures and Essays Since the End of World War II,* p.5.

[6] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.(xiv). See also Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of Science', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.386-388; Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Morality', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.38; Horkheimer, M. 'Montaigne and the Function of Skepticism', in in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.292; 308; Horkheimer, M. ''Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.241; Horkheimer, M. 'Art and Mass Culture', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.275; Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason,* p.(vi); Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.343.

[7] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto*, p.21.

[8] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.219.

[9] Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.46.

[10] Das, S.B. 'Philosophy and Melancholy: Benjamin on Language and Truth.' Review article of I. Ferber, *Philosophy and Melancholy: Benjamin's Early Reflections on Theatre and Language,* in *Comparative and Cultural Philosophy*, Vol.6, No.1, May 2014, pp.90-98.

relationships. After all, Habermas wrote in the mid-1960s that critical reason achieves its power over dogma since a '… higher level of reflection coincides with a step forward in the process toward the autonomy of the individual, with the elimination of suffering and the furthering of concrete happiness.'[11] This is quite different from Adorno's view that '… this society is not moving towards a welfare state. It is gaining increasing control over its citizens but this control grows in tandem with the growth in its irrationality'[12] or Horkheimer's view (during the same conversation) that '… mankind is destroying itself. The world is mad and will remain so.'[13]

But Horkheimer already expressed the same sentiments (although in different contexts) decades earlier. For instance, in a letter to Rosa Riekher and Friedrich Pollock, dated 22 August 1918, he was certainly not short of his own self-assurance about criticizing the '… intellectually limited individual …' or the '… stupid from the day he was born.…'[14] – thus implying his own higher level of reflection and intolerance of the inhumane and mundane world. This statement reflects his relationship with being. Similarly, in a letter (again to Rosa Riekher) dated 25 October 1921, he made no bone that his own '… stuff is much better …'[15] and how he '… clearly pointed out this [Professor Schumann's] nonsense to him.…'[16] The implication is that Horkheimer seemed to know practical suggestions of how the current era (life) could be better structured. Lastly, suffice to state that the first set of collected undated journal entries in *Dawn and Decline* (written between 1926 and 1931) contain numerous references to higher levels of reflection, e.g. the autonomy of the individual; eradicating suffering, or the advancement of human happiness. These facets of life are compromised in the irrational bourgeois society of his times. For instance, Horkheimer wrote that '[c]ompulsion, not freedom, suffering, not pleasure, are to be curbed. It is related to human production. In a rational society, the concept of work changes.'[17] Max Klinger postulated that real happiness is derived from the challenges of unpacking the complexities of work.[18]

A few cryptic points about Horkheimer's view of 'work' would provide some perspective as we find them in a unique document of notes taken down by Gretel Adorno, of discussions between Horkheimer and Adorno over a period of three weeks in the spring of 1956. According to Horkheimer, work (as a human category) in its original form, developed as an exchange principle. Because such takes place between people, work therefore mediates relationships between people. In

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[11] Habermas, J. *Theory and Practice*, p.254.
[12] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto*, pp.38-39.
[13] Ibid., p.39.
[14] Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, pp.7; 14.
[15] Ibid., p.19.
[16] Ibid., p.18.
[17] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.84; See also Horkheimer, M. 'Montaigne and the Function of Skepticism', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.265-311.
[18] Klinger, M. 'A Summary of Adorno and Horkheimer's quite Interesting and Staggeringly Pretentious Views on Art.' <themaxklinger.wordpress.com>

so doing, a special relationship comes into existence – one that is reflected in the fact that as a matter of course, people do not enjoy work. Therefore, people work in order not to work. But not being able to work is the worst form of punishment. Thus: mediation through work between people is reflected in human existence in equating civilization to labour. Idolizing the one is as bad is idolizing other. Viewed idealistically, freedom suggests not having to work. This is only possible if the freedom to accumulate is superseded by the freedom of not having to accumulate. The dialectic of work finds expression in belief that in this day and age, we have enough resources at our disposal to eradicate e.g. both work and war. But, man is only worth something if he/she works. There is an element of freedom locked up in this and the danger is not to mix up work with happiness. It is only when people can exist beyond something concrete, that they are fully absorbed by that something ideologically. But essentially, people are nothing more than workers.[19] In fact, as early as August 1918, Horkheimer wrote in a letter to Rosa Riekher and Friedrich Pollock: 'Maidon, our life is work!'[20] Much later in his life (in 1956) Horkheimer said to Adorno: 'People are nothing more than workers.'[21]

In so doing, Horkheimer formulated this fundamental link between, for instance, happiness, suffering and work in the following manner: 'To make work the most important human action is an ascetic ideology'[22] since it is the main contributing factor that leads to suffering. This is so because there appears to be a seamless (and necessary) relationship between the individual, work and suffering. The complexity of the real world lies in the fact that '[c]ivil affairs and military, war and peace, are all interlocked.'[23] This view of Horkheimer's, (written in *c.*1957), can already also be found in his youthful wrings of *Aus der Pubertät* as well as in early aphorisms in *Dawn and Decline.* Horkheimer's role in the establishment of the Institute for Social Research, was directed at attending to remedy contemporary and future human life. But, to study the concept of suffering, implies that it should be done in conjunction with others such as happiness, struggling, false consciousness, historical epoch, etc. For instance, in his inaugural speech on 24 January 1931, Horkheimer referred to happiness in the following manner: '… social philosophy is confronted with the yearning for a new interpretation of a life trapped in its individual striving for happiness.'[24] Without belabouring the point, this methodology was not followed in our study. Instead, the focus is on Horkheimer's

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[19] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto*, pp.3-6; 8-12; 19. See also Engelbrecht, C. 'Marx's Theory of Colonisation and Contemporary Eastern Cape (South Africa) Historiography.' <http://independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers1755482> 25 June 2012, pp.1-17.

[20] Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.14.

[21] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto,* p.51.

[22] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.83. Horkheimer's concept of work, needs an investigation on its own.

[23] Horkheimer, M. 'The Concept of Man', in Horkheimer, M. *Critique of Instrumental Reason. Lectures and Essays Since the End of World War II*, p.18.

[24] Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.7; Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* pp.11-12.

dissatisfaction '… with the earthly order of things.'[25]

2. Horkheimer's adjectives for suffering

The following summary of a selection of the adjectives which Horkheimer used to describe the scope of suffering, is only of general value to encapsulate the extent to which they give some idea of what Horkheimer had in mind. In a sense these also reflect the inherent dynamic of the concept suffering in its own.[26]

Adjectives	**Source**
shared suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.18
general suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.19 *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* p.186
boundless suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.28
unnecessary suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* pp.29; 74; 216
inordinate suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.48
heightened suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.84
excessive suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.108
objective suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.108
untold suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* pp.108; 221
enormous human suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.109
extreme forms of suffering	*Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969,* p.207
internal suffering	*Life in Letters,* p.365
individual suffering	*Between Philosophy and Social Science,* p.221
face of suffering	*Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.24
suffering of past generations	*Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.26
conditions under which men suffer	*Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, p.32
senseless suffering	*Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.63
infinite suffering	*Eclipse of Reason,* p.85
increased suffering	*Dialectic of Enlightenment,* p.(xvii)
praised suffering	*Critique of Instrumental Reason,* p.122

The basis for analysing Horkheimer's descriptions of suffering, is 'surplus' suffering. John Abromeit gave the following useful definition of Horkheimer's concept of surplus suffering: 'The present social system is also based on high levels of surplus suffering, that is, suffering that could be eliminated in a more rational society.'[27] There is, in our view, and for our purposes herein, some similarity between Marx's concept of 'surplus value' and surplus suffering as used by Horkheimer. For that reason, a few general observations regarding Marx's surplus value serve as a brief reminder.

The working class owns nothing except its own labour power. Labour power is a unique property in the sense that it has value and that of being able to create value. Labour power is furthermore the

[25] Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.50.
[26] Ferber, I. *Philosophy and Melancholy. Benjamin's Early Reflections on Theatre and Language,* p.1.
[27] Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.160; 177.

essential component of capitalist production but it is also consumed. Whilst no-one forces the labourer to enter into a relationship with the capitalist, he makes his own free choice when doing so. Paradoxically, this 'freedom' that he has, is a two-fold freedom – on the one hand a choice between the freedom to sell his labour, and on the other the freedom not to sell and starve. Because the worker has no other measures to access the means of production, he sells his labour power to the capitalist. In so doing, he produces a net product for the capitalist. At the same time, his labour power was consumed in this production process of his own making. But even the consumption of labour power, is a labour itself. The value of labour (as indicated above) is transferred onto the value of the product. Because of the value a product has and is then sold at a price in order to derive quantities of money, this generates surplus value. It is in this manufacturing process that the practice of exploitation is the extraction of surplus value, in other words: surplus value equals profit. Since the product belongs to the capitalist, so does the surplus value that was extracted – in other words the profit – also belongs to the capitalist. The surplus value, or profit, is therefore the result of having sold the product for more than the wages necessary to produce the required work. So: the net value of the product, minus the wages, is the profit. Wages and profit are both money and are the capital employed for the productive process. The produced product, which is the result of capitalist production, is intended for some form of consumption. Because the product needs to be sold, it becomes is a commodity production. The production process involves constant capital and variable capital. The former is the value employed but is immediately transferred to the product. Variable capital however, is the workers' pay – that is not constant in the production process. The difference between constant and variable capital, constitutes surplus value.

3. A general overview of suffering

It appears as if there is no universal theoretical framework that will enhance an understanding[28] of suffering. The word 'suffering' has its origin in Middle English (*c.*1200-1250) and comes from the French *suffrir* and Latin *suffrre.* The Greek word *paschó* (πάσχω) means 'to feel heavy emotion.' Suffering is experienced in many different ways by sentient people, as individuals or as a group.

[28] Regarding the difficulty about 'truth,' see for instance Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.45. Regarding the understanding of the essence of the world, see for instance Horkheimer, M. 'A New Concept of Ideology?', in in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.135. With regards the universal understanding or a comprehensive model for understanding, see for instance Horkheimer, M. 'On the Problem of Truth', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.189; Horkheimer, M. The Social Function of Philosophy'' in Horkheimer, M. 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.255; Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.(xi).

Huxley, for instance, mentioned that suffering is part of human experience. Citizens without such, would be '… less-than-human'.[29]

In the limited sense of the word, suffering generally refers to physical pain. In the broader sense, however, it refers to emotional or mental pain. One of the first images that come up when we talk in layman's terms about suffering is such which follows at the hands of e.g. all forms of religious persecution. World history is filled with examples of not too few societies that experienced religious persecution.

Suffering is regarded as a process – an experience or experiences, of pain, distress or hardship over a period of time or at a particular point in time. The sufferer is caught up in a state of a bad or unpleasant experience to which he/she was (is) subjected – meaning he/she was at a point in time affected by external influences that gave rise to internal (emotional) suffering. In many circumstances, suffering seems to be the result from human greed – people who despise the weak or the Other – thus, an underlining disregard (respect) for others, including suffering *per se*. The suffering person is distinguished from the non-sufferer by a sense of becoming, or being, or appearing to become, worse off in his/her quality of existence. This relative condition (not only in the form of material degradation) is the foundation for a broad range of experiences of suffering that are prevalent in different forms of intensity, from mild to intolerable – and it is questionable whether the experience and intensity are the same in (and by) different people. Certainly, their responses testify thereto, but even so, to talk – that is, the verbal expression of thinking – about suffering, does not adequately reveal that real suffering is (in one form or another) a universal part of our (un)humanity in a fallen world.[30]

Therefore: the causes, duration, frequency, experiences and effects of suffering appear to be unique to each individual, as are human attitudes towards (their) suffering and the circumstances. These attitudes vary from perceptions of suffering: being avoidable or unavoidable; useful or useless; deserved or undeserved; justified or unjustified and understandable suffering, to simply senseless (nonsensical) forms of thereof. At this point in our discussion, the observations of D. Brooks about suffering are pertinent for our purposes. I simply restate his most salient points: human happiness refers to the future, whilst suffering relates to the past; suffering can give people an outsider's view – an attuned realisation of what insiders are enduring; suffering drags a person inside him/her/self; it gives people deep awareness of their own limitations; sometimes people feel as if they are drawn into a larger providence, and they begin to feel a call.[31]

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[29] Huxley, A. 'Brave New World Suffering.' <www.shmoop.com/brave-new-world/suffering-theme.html>

[30] O'Brian, B. 'Life is Suffering? What Does That Mean?' <buddam.about.com./od/thefournobletruths/a/dukkaexplain.htm>; Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.130.

[31] Brooks, D. 'What Suffering Does.' <www.nytimes.com/2014/04/08/opinion/brooks-what-suffering-does.html?_r=0>

Needless to say, many spheres of human life are affected by suffering: the individual's perception; the nature of suffering; the origin and causes of suffering; the significance and meaning of suffering; related personal, social and cultural behaviours; remedies to suffering; management of suffering and even the uses of suffering. Social scientists Kleinman, Das and Lock, traced human social suffering back to consequences of e.g. war, depression, disease, torture and famine – phenomena in society that Horkheimer was well aware of. These, they argued, are in turn, the result of political, economic and institutional power and human responses thereto.[32] Perhaps, the term *social* suffering is too restricted since suffering also includes the social, economic, emotional, etc.

Pain is generally accepted as an integral part of suffering, but in itself is a confusing denominator. On the one hand, pain and suffering seem to be interchangeable synonymous, but on the other, pain is seen to be physical in nature and inevitable. In contradistinction, suffering is mental and alleged to be optional. For instance, Mager argued that physical pain has clear-cut biological and psychological parts that respond to stimulus and response. Between stimulus and response, he continued, is space – the place where choices are located for humans to make. Secondly, biological pain is the signal transmitted through the central nervous system indicating that 'something is wrong.' Lastly, the psychology of pain is the interpretation or meaning we assign to a (that) hint of pain. Essentially then, suffering is the aggregate of '… imbalances in physical, mental, emotional and or spiritual functioning.'[33] One way out of suffering, according to Warren, is that many '… researchers have shown unequivocally that stress and suffering can be drastically reduced by meditation and mindfulness of life.'[34] From this position he advocates that human positive emotions can be trained. Ghandi for instance, defined the 'Law of Suffering' as '… the necessity of the nonviolent actor voluntarily enduring suffering as a mechanism for transforming an opponent'[35] – in other words, it is a rational disposition.

From the above, it is clear that suffering has a multi-dimensional connotation and therefore we move away from a mono-dimensional – physical and/or emotional – type of suffering perspective. Schopenhauer, for instance, with his influence on Horkheimer, wrote in *On Human Nature* that a man of virtue focuses his attention on the '… sufferings, his needs, anxieties, his pains.'[36] Here suffering and pain was used interchangeably for '… man is the only animal which causes pain to others without any further purpose than just to cause it.'[37] Such is the result of human '… *character as theoretically* an act of will….'[38] But it was Schopenhauer's *The Wisdom of Life* (one of the first books Horkheimer

[32] Kleinman, A., V. Das and M.M. Lock (eds.) 'Social Suffering.' <www.ucpress.edu/book.php?-isbn=9780520209954>
[33] Mager, D. 'Pain is Inevitable: Suffering is Optional.' <www.psychologytoday.com/blog/some-assembly-required/201401/pain-is-inevitable-suffering-is-optional>
[34] Warren , J. 'The Neuroscience of Suffering – And Its End', in *Psychology Tomorrow*, Issue 9, Nov. 2013.
[35] Metta Center for Nonviolence. <mettacenter.org/definitions/gloss-concepts/law-of-suffering>
[36] Schopenhauer, A. *On Human Nature. Essays in Ethics and Politics*, pp.2-3.
[37] Ibid., pp.13-14.
[38] Ibid., p.58.

read) that is generally regarded as the one that made a lasting impression of him. Accordingly, human misery is of two kinds: direct as we experience it, and secondly, indirectly when we are mainly engaged at observing the suffering of others.[39] Such 'others' are for instance the wealthy – as Horkheimer called them – '... those on top in this society are horrible.'[40] Even they suffer the fears of unavoidable misfortune.[41] Horkheimer made this point, for instance, in an aphorism 'Time is Money' when he discussed how unproductivity of workers '… would necessarily reduce Krupp's profit.'[42]

On the on hand, argued Schopenhauer, since the immediate surroundings (environment) where e.g. poverty cause pain, humans act greatest on those threatening forms of suffering to which we are most vulnerable.[43] Schopenhauer contended that because our happiness depends on our spirits, and they, in turn, depend on our health, a high degree of suffering is required before man would act on his/her own life.[44] Already Horkheimer argued his entire life against exploitive material conditions and regression towards barbarism that undermines human happiness and existence. Schopenhauer routed for the role of the personality and individuality of man against all that we do and suffer.[45] The relative disposition to suffering for Schopenhauer and Horkheimer is as follows: Schopenhauer said that '… the same external events or circumstances affect no two people alike.…'[46] A closer look at Horkheimer's aphorism 'Everyone Must Die,' reveals his views about the relative difference between the lives of the rich *vis a vis* the poor[47] in relation to access to means for prolonging life.

Nietzsche however, emphasised the human will to power. A cryptic reference to Nietzsche is in order since, together with Schopenhauer he was one of the first influences on Horkheimer. Human 'will to power' frequently appeared in e.g. Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* His references relate to human 'will to power' because '… wherever I find a living thing, there found I WILL to POWER, and even in the will of the servant found I the will to be master.'[48] This will to power is equally prevalent amongst good and bad people. Furthermore, Nietzsche also spoke about will to truth; will to existence and will to life.[49] These 'wills' are very strong. They are '… something, invulnerable, unburiable […] with me, something that would rend rocks asunder: it is called MY WILL.'[50] Clearly then, 'will' in the wrong hands, spell nothing good for the Other. Per implication then, the will to power in the hands of 'bad' people, give cause to unnecessary suffering that the innocent does not deserve.

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[39] Ibid., p.74.
[40] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.21.
[41] Schopenhauer, A. *The Wisdom of Life,* p.13.
[42] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.23.
[43] Schopenhauer, A. *The Wisdom of Life,* pp.14-15.
[44] Ibid., pp.11; 13.
[45] Ibid., pp.5; 10.
[46] Ibid., p.4.
[47] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.38.
[48] Nietzsche, F.W. *Thus Spake Zarathustra. A Book for all and None*, p.125.
[49] Ibid., pp.66; 126.
[50] Ibid., p.123.

Early in his life, in a letter to his friend, Pollock, dated 9 September 1912, Horkheimer '…expressed his general dissatisfaction with the social world of the bourgeoisie.'[51] In 'L'ile heureuse' a short story, Horkheimer wrote about the ideals of Pollock, Neumeier and he had for the future, and their hatred for bourgeois society – a society, according to him, which ensures only its own interests, e.g. wealth and fame at the expense of the lower classes who are engaged in a brutal struggle for their mere existence.[52] Horkheimer's own views about war was personified in a character, Walter, in his 'War: A Correspondence" – that war centres on the acquirement of property and power[53] – a view he penned even before WWI. About two decades later, in a letter dated 24 July 1934 to Eric Fromm, Horkheimer wrote that '… wars are nevertheless determined by the basic economic structure of society and the class conflict that results from it.'[54]

The following year, in a letter dated 22 August 1918 to Rosa Riekher and Friedrich Pollock, Horkheimer gave a critique of *Madame Bovary*. For him '… the horror of death and suffering is intensified a thousandfold.'[55] In the same letter, Horkheimer made comments about Wang-lun in *The Broken Melon.* The character, instead of leaving himself to be killed by soldiers, contemplated suicide instead, however '… finds a way out by transcending himself.'[56]

In a letter dated 25 October 1921 to Rosa Riekher, Horkheimer bemoaned his real life situation. He missed Rosa Riekher terribly – to the extent that one '… can go mad!'[57] He continued that his '… earlier suffering appear insignificant in the face of current suffering [...] I believe that I have never suffered as terribly on account of our separation as I do now.'[58] About two weeks later, again in a letter to Rosa Riekher, he reiterated: '… I am suffering because you are not with me….'[59] At the end of the same month in a further letter dated 30 November 1921 to Rosa Riekher, Horkheimer became even more desperate – he felt compromised, and wrote: 'We have to talk about whether my ability to work, my health, and my youth may be further ruined by our separation.'[60] Work, in this instance, referred to Horkheimer's studies – he was intensely committed to complete his Ph.D. since so much in his life depended on it. In early July1948, on occasion when Horkheimer was in Paris, he wrote to Friedrich Pollock how he '… wouldn't have thought I would suffer so much because on my separation from Maidon. Whether you believe it or not, I'm also suffering because of the separation

[51] Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.23-24.
[52] Ibid., p.27.
[53] Ibid., p.28.
[54] Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.37. For a detailed discussion of Horkheimer's short stories, plays etc. see Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.32 ff.
[55] Jacobson, M.R and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.10.
[56] Ibid., p.11.
[57] Ibid., p.17.
[58] Ibid., pp.17-18.
[59] Ibid., p.20.
[60] Ibid., p.22.

from you.'[61] The following year Horkheimer wrote to Maidon from the ship RMS *Mauretania*, about the pain he has being separated from her.[62] But, in a letter dated 18 May 1950, Horkheimer '… felt indescribable joy …'[63] when he was reunited with Maidon in Paris. However, a few years earlier, on 22 March 1946, Horkheimer wrote to Helen and Felix Weil about the '… pain that one feels at such an event….'[64] of his mother's death. Accordingly, when Maidon, Adorno, and Pollock died in just a few years from another, Horkheimer expressed his pain in various letters to friends.[65] Pollock's death for instance, was a '… new intellectual pain …'[66] for him.

In the name of 'progress' – some two thousand years after Christ, and despite mankind's achievements such as the introduction of airplanes and the first airship, '… many are suffering, and the danger is that this era will devour us,'[67] – it is a moment in time (mid-1940s) that represents the '… present collapse of bourgeois civilization',[68] Horkheimer wrote. 'Suffering,' he continued, '… during a period of historical development that is necessary for progress …',[69] is what we pay with for the sake of 'progress.' Wretchedness continues to persist and behind every worker follows hunger and misery.[70] Take work as an example: social work in bourgeois society exists on the basis of the advancement of the self – but does so in two ways. On the one hand labour is supposed to generate increased capital, but on the other, it is the strength for additional work.[71] Progress, therefore, seems to be a contradiction in terminus – it is destructive and regresses in an enlightened civilization into barbarism by turning cultural progress into its dialectic opposites.[72] Bourgeois society is outdated and the masses suffer as a result under the capitalist. An outdated society is characterized by '… how close we come to the realization of some particular and relatively accidental value.'[73] In other words, Horkheimer linked suffering to the relative and unequal distribution of income.[74] Instead, real progress '… is the improvement of material existence through a more purposeful restructuring of human conditions.'[75] However, technology, for instance, is gaining power over society[76] - the human

[61] Ibid., p.263.
[62] Ibid., p.272.
[63] Ibid., p.277.
[64] Ibid., p.238.
[65] Ibid., p.364-365.
[66] Ibid., p.365.
[67] Ibid., p.17.
[68] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.(xiv).
[69] Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of Science', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.372-373.
[70] Horkheimer, M. 'Authority and the family'', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* pp.55; 86.
[71] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.23.
[72] Ibid., pp.(xvi; xiii-ix).
[73] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, pp.94; 96.
[74] Ibid., p.96.
[75] Ibid., p.93.
[76] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.95.

mind, language, weapons and machines are instruments of power.[77] Likewise, even the purpose of science, Horkheimer and Adorno wrote, is dubious.[78] Science is no better off: '[a] science which took no account of the suffering, misery and limitations of its period would be entirely lacking in practical interest …'[79] in the sense that it does not contribute to the alleviation of the suffering of daily living.

The relationship between 'progress' and suffering came up in an aphorism 'Unlimited Possibilities' also included early, in *Dawn and Decline.* Progress is not necessarily a reducer of suffering. For instance, because the extraordinary has become commonplace in society, humans suffer more than is necessary. This situation is for instance clear in Horkheimer's explanation that in the process of fighting for liberalism for mankind '… real persons are slowly being tortured to death …' and '… the horrors of one's own city is submerged in […] general suffering….'[80] In a society where evil, injustices and cruelty are integral components of the social order[81], all this human suffering is unnecessary because the potentialities of 'progress,' are supposed to protect the citizenry. This 'additional' suffering, in our view, equates to 'surplus suffering.'

In one of the first aphorisms included in *Dawn and Decline,* 'Monadology', Horkheimer wrote in a roundabout way that 'shared suffering'[82] was required to have a comprehensive perspective on life, instead of the current 'window' that allows only a fractional view of life. Those inside the house could only be aware of what's going on outside if they were aware of the 'shared suffering' outside in the real world. Conversely, the collective 'shared suffering' would influence those inside the house about their miserable conditions. This is an inter-active and reciprocal relationship between people who should communicate and have empathy with one another. In reality however, the class-divided society negates this ideal. Take for instance Horkheimer's example of prison conditions – they are already miserable conditions and the lot of the prisoner is aggravated by the tyrannical director at the prison. This situation is the result of the extension of evil, injustice and cruelty that forms '… part and parcel of this order….,[83] into entire daily lives of the citizenry. 'Today, they put out down with fire and sword whatever may even remotely jeopardize the readiness of the masses for a new war, a new bloodletting' Horkheimer wrote in 'Limits of Freedom' in the mid-1920s.[84]

Horkheimer, on more than one occasion, referred to the position and behaviour of the top levels in society. They are horrible people and together with the social hierarchy that perpetuate inequalities, some are at the mercy of others. For instance, in order to get somewhere or to advance in society, one needs to be exploitive to survive; engaged in competitive struggle and have little or no moral scruples. In practical terms, such take place at the expense of e.g. the small capitalist entrepreneur or every day

[77] Ibid., pp.17-18; 28-29.
[78] Ibid., p.(xiv).
[79] Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.51
[80] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.19.
[81] Ibid., p.20.
[82] Ibid., pp.17-18.
[83] Ibid., pp.20; 22.
[84] Ibid., p.28.

person. [85] The same can be argued in respect of using violence[86] to secure own material goods. If it is not employed the suffering at the hands of the perpetrator of violence is unnecessary. This situation reflects a certain unequal power relationship. Power must not be seen in the narrow sense of the word but in terms of a relationship. For instance, in the workplace time is money. Since work weighs heavily on the worker and should his unproductivity leads to loss, not only for the entrepreneur but ultimately for the worker as well – no work = starvation. Thus the worker (or individual) suffers at the hands of the powerful – it affects even the soul of the individual.[87]

Horkheimer's earliest definition of 'suffering'?

'The Undiscovered Land' is probably Horkheimer's first exposition of what 'suffering' means. In comparison to all other beings, humankind's existence appears to be vastly privileged. If the well-dispositional person truly experiences inner and outer freedom, his/her privileges become more pronounced – meaning, of value or significance. Such person may route for the less fortunate – those who suffer, in other words. 'But …', wrote Horkheimer, '… our privileged position, our capacity for experiencing the suffering of all beings within ourselves does not mean that we can truly become one with them and certainly not that we can free anyone by that act of identification.'[88] There is thus a void between our ability to experience suffering and our inability to be united with them, on the one hand, and our inability to set such suffering individual free simply because we identify with his/her suffering. At best, and with the help of empirical tools, we can alleviate such suffering, but we remain surrounded by 'darkness.' This 'darkness' cannot be overcome by language – no amount of language can describe suffering adequately. In other words, language is too limited to take us to the deep levels if finite explanation and understanding – in this sense, language's capacity is an illusion. At least, this partial comprehension is better than the claim that our insight equals total knowledge – that remains, at best, impossible.

For Horkheimer, '… human society is embedded in language.'[89] Even metaphysics does not help. Since we cannot make finite discoveries, we remain, essentially, in the dark[90] and the same is true about trying to make truth clear in simple terms.[91] In practical terms this means that one cannot comprehend the suffering of those in jail – the very place where surplus suffering is inflicted at the hands of the officials – '… unless one is really locked up in it.'[92] Worse is that '… those responsible

[85] Ibid., pp.21-22; 27.
[86] Ibid., p.22.
[87] Ibid., pp.23-24; 31; 48.
[88] Ibid., p.31.
[89] Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto,* p.5.
[90] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.31.
[91] Ibid., p.17.
[92] Ibid., p.31.

for suffering see to it that nothing interferes with the mechanism.'[93] The analogy is the same as with justice – although it can be improved upon, ''… perfect justice is undiscoverable …' and unthinkable.[94] Recently, Ferber, in her penetrating treatment of melancholy in the work of Benjamin dealt with the '… the transformation of words into ideas.'[95]

But even under socialism, the situation is no better. Since socialism does not necessarily follow from Marx's economic theories, and because the '… unnecessary material and spiritual suffering …' is not automatically going to disappear,[96] it must be fought for. One reason why it has not disappeared from bourgeois society is because bourgeois morality functions so well for them: the worker suffers at the hand of his master who does not even want to give his worker is small increase. The result is '… the horrible decline of the middle-class …' because of the suffering imposed by the ruling few on them.[97] Horkheimer made the same point in another aphorism 'Social Resentment' – a few 'free' people exploit and determine the lives of the civilized worker who is much worse off that he/she should be.[98] This suffering is the result of today's social structure that harbours '… unimaginable suffering of the animals, [and] the animal hell in human society….'[99] For instance, Horkheimer was clear about his rejection of animal suffering at the hands of circus operators.[100] It comes as no surprize that one encounters so much suffering since bourgeois mentality places the worth of someone '… through the anonymous machinery.'[101] But, to ignore '… the general machinery of exploitation …' will not alleviate such suffering.[102] More so from a historical perspective, for Horkheimer said: '[t]he history of the masses is largely one of suffering'[103] because the activities of the proletariat over the centuries were (are) directed at the abolition of exploitation. However, the harder they try to achieve such, the more they are subjected at the counter-methods employed by the ruling class. Consequently they face 'untold suffering.' [104] Fundamentally, the dispersion of bourgeois efficiency in commerce and industry works against the material existence of the masses. So, their longing for a better (utopian) life '… is a reaction to the social situation in […] which the masses live and suffer …'[105] into inhuman existence. In other words, such is the suffering in the prevailing social society.[106]
With the disappearance of the belief in the eternal life of the Spirit and objective idealism, so did

[93] Ibid., p.42.
[94] Ibid., p.32.
[95] Ferber, I. *Philosophy and Melancholy. Benjamin's Early Reflections on Theatre and Language,* p.2.
[96] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, pp.35-36.
[97] Ibid., p.54.
[98] Ibid., p.74.
[99] Ibid., p.68.
[100] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, pp.145; 148.
[101] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.70.
[102] Ibid., p.84.
[103] Ibid., p.85.
[104] Ibid., p.108.
[105] Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of Science', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.321; 369.
[106] Ibid., pp.370-371.

'…[s]uffering and death […] appear in their naked senselessness….'[107] In fact, since '… bourgeois virtue as a means of domination became increasingly important …',[108] then '… the majority of humanity would be better off if it just became accustomed to restraining its own demand of happiness….'[109]

A practical example that socialism does not casually flow from Marx's theories can be found in Horkheimer's views about the relationship between history and psychology. Horkheimer explained that instead of having to follow the belief that humans are only psychologically driven by material want, they are also driven by collective association towards, e.g. war and revolutions. In so doing they are prepared to risk their own suffering and death.[110] In such case there are at least two observations to be considered. On the one hand is the view that such suffering human beings who must then be content with the notion the whole is innate to them. On the other hand, wrote Horkheimer '… a life that effects both welfare and misery of others expresses its irrationality in the suffering of the majority of human beings.'[111] It is, Horkheimer argued, '… the connection between the morality and the practices of the bourgeois individual …'[112] that perpetuate wars, famines, economic crises, revolutions and counterrevolutions. Furthermore, the premium placed on bourgeois symbols, tied the exploited masses into a position of '… irrational …'[113] subjection. The masses are subjected to the power of irrational bourgeois 'truth.'[114]

In practical terms of every-day life, suffering is not simply a consequence of social position in life. For instance, the rich settle their divorce agreements in financial terms much easier than the poor can hope for.[115] Secondly, in the world of science human social position does not stand separate from material life, science and technological impact of 'progress'. Horkheimer defined science as '… the

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[107] Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.5.

[108] Horkheimer, M. 'Egoism and Freedom Movement', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.55.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Horkheimer, M. 'History and Psychology'', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.123.

[111] Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Morality', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), pp.20; 29.

[112] Horkheimer, M. 'Egoism and Freedom Movement', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.59.

[113] Ibid., pp.63; 67.

[114] Horkheimer, M. 'Montaigne and the Function of Skepticism', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings.* (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. Introduction by G.F. Hunter), p.278.

[115] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, pp.87; 91-92.

body of knowledge which a given society has assembled in its struggle with nature.'[116] Since science is a productive power, it also creates social values of its own – clearly according to this definition, over time – in different forms. If usefulness of knowledge is one, then science is not fulfilling its worth because unequal advanced development of the real needs of mankind is unable to eradicate human wretchedness.[117] It is for this reason that economic theories of and for society, were born from more than simply theoretical motives, but from the want to understand present-day society. One such understanding is reflected in Horkheimer's position when he had to leave academia. In a letter to the Prussian Minister for Science, Art, and People's Education in Berlin, dated 21 April 1933, Horkheimer wrote about the pain he experienced because he had to leave his university position[118] and his own suffering because of ill health the last few years.[119] To Friedrich Pollock, Horkheimer wrote on 27 May 1934, that Julian Gumperz '… has suffered excessively….'[120] In the case of religion, as mankind travels through history, he loses history and this leaves a mark behind. One such mark is that even Christianity has lost its function because instead of expressing the ideal, it became the '…bed-fellow…' of the state.[121] Since authority is a central category of history,[122] state authority penetrates all spheres of life – even the realm of religion is not spared.

For Horkheimer, current society is not acceptable – it has been the subject of his critique since his teens. Now, in the late 1930s, he can describe '[c]ritical [t]heory of society as it is, a theory dominated at every turn by a concern for reasonable conditions of life.'[123] We have dealt with war, misery, suffering and wretchedness, before in this article – which are, amongst other things, not representative of truly enlightened conditions of life. Therefore, such need to be eradicated from society and any form of relapsing into a state of barbarism, prevented. This (suffering) is a long historical process and, he wrote, is eternal.[124] It is for this reason that '[c]ritical thought has a concept of man as in conflict which himself until this opposition is removed …'[125] because '… inhumanity affects everything that goes on in the society.'[126] For instance, bourgeois thought is principally abstract in nature thus removed from the world because it does not benefit the material conditions of the masses. It does not understand not take cognisance of the consequences of its exchange economy and how resultant subsequent ongoing changes in social relationships continue to underline persistent exploitation and

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[116] Horkheimer, M. 'The Latest Attack on Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.133.
[117] Horkheimer, M. 'Notes on Science and the Crisis', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* pp.3-4; 8.
[118] Jacobson, M.R and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.27.
[119] Ibid., p.26.
[120] Ibid., p.31.
[121] Horkheimer, M. 'Thoughts on Religion', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, pp.129; 131.
[122] Horkheimer, M. 'Authority and the Family', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.69.
[123] Horkheimer, M. 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.199.
[124] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.219.
[125] Horkheimer, M. 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.210.
[126] Ibid.

oppression.[127] Hence, the goal of Critical Theory is to untie man's manipulation from slavery[128] but, Horkheimer wrote in a letter to Adorno dated 18 September 1935, '… theory always corresponds to the history of a specific period.'[129]

In January 1939, Horkheimer wrote to R.H. Hutchins in Chicago asking for financial assistance for the Institute. In explaining the background and current conditions in which the Institute operates he wrote: '[a]mong the frightful experiences which we have suffered as a result of the collapse of civilization in our native country.…'[130] suffering is this sense means personal suffering and sacrifices made having had to leave everything in Germany behind. Secondly, suffering = loss of civilization. Following the tragic death of Walter Benjamin, Horkheimer wrote to R.M. Nunberg in Santa Monica in October 1940 '… of the deep loss we have suffered.'[131] To Harold Laski on 10 March 1941, he referred to '… a heavy personal loss to suffer….'[132]

In a letter to Paul Massing dated 26 August 1941, Horkheimer wrote that '… pain calls one back to the present.'[133] Two days later to Adorno, Horkheimer wrote: '[a]s you know, I've been pursuing the relationship between pain, art, and the voyeur for a long time. My earliest writing deal with this question…. For several weeks now I've been reflecting on the role of pain in all sorts of counterrevolutionaries.'[134]

Reason has become incapable to determine what the ultimate crisis in life is because the crisis of reason is the flipside of the crisis of the individual. Thus, it is difficult to rationally correctly answer the question: what does it mean for man to claim he knows his own interests best?[135] For instance, during the industrial age, self-interest gained the upper-hand and subjected all other fundamental motives of an effective society. Language is an example – it is reduced to a fore of production and contains elements of mythological rests[136] – contrary to what it is meant to be. Horkheimer repeated the position of the clergy and aristocrats – being creators of symbols admired by the masses.[137] Mankind's limitless imperialism is never satisfied – forces of domination – be it reason, science, church, bourgeois structure of society – all '… uphold a tale of infinite suffering.'[138]

Suffering is perpetuated by power. Horkheimer and Adorno wrote: 'Adaptation to the power of progress furthers the progress of power, constantly renewing the degenerations which prove successful progress […] to be its own antithesis. The cruse of irresistible progress is irresistible

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[127] Ibid., pp.216; 226; 238; 241.
[128] Horkheimer, M. 'Postscript', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays,* p.246.
[129] Quoted by R. Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance,* p.195.
[130] Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.143.
[131] Ibid., p.169.
[132] Ibid., p.173.
[133] Ibid., p.183.
[134] Ibid., pp.192-193.
[135] Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason,* pp.63; 18; 86.
[136] Ibid., p.15.
[137] Ibid., p.28.
[138] Ibid., pp.74; 85; 93; 86.

regression'[139] into barbarism. In this dialectical relationship the '… powerlessness attracts the enemy of the powerlessness.'[140] It is therefore not surprising that even the totalitarian society, cannot eradicate suffering[141] - not if we consider that domination secures its own future through economic power.[142] Science is also infected. Horkheimer wrote that science '… has suffered from all the uncontrollable influences of other sectors of economic [*sic*] social life.'[143] The entrepreneur suffers following severe financial loss[144] whilst the innocent suffered under Hitler.[145] On 16 August 1950, Horkheimer wrote about the suffering one has to endear, given that '… culture has become outmoded…'[146] following the little '… culture survived in Germany …'[147] after WWII. In June 1963 he wrote: 'The Nazi episode may not remain only a dark spot in one's own history. It can be remembered as one of the painful historical experiences of one's own people through which it comes with age.'[148]

What is required is a total effort to mitigate suffering. A kind of solidarity with suffering is needed to eradicate social induced suffering. On the one hand progress perpetuates suffering and on the other Horkheimer was convinced, that only little of European culture has been left over. For the Jews for instance, suffering and hope are inseparable.[149]

Conclusion

Since there appears to be no universal system to orderly arrange individual life-systems, some would argue that cultural dis-order is closely connected to relationships of economic nature. For many students of late-capitalism, it reflects '… the metropole's broken promises….[150] The lack of a unified explanatory model stems from the belief that '… no proposition can claim the dignity of perfect knowledge.'[151] For instance, the family can no longer be seen merely as a function of economic wo/man. Instead, it is an important institution for how individuals live and suffer. But, in an unjust society, the individual is reduced to noting but '… the representative of an economic function….'[152] The consequence is that even the results of science, are always conditional. Although for A. Huxley

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[139] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments* p.28.
[140] Ibid., p.138.
[141] Ibid., p.122.
[142] Ibid., p.82.
[143] Jacobson, M.R and E.M. Jacobson. *Max Horkheimer. A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.227.
[144] Ibid., p.252.
[145] Ibid., p.254.
[146] Ibid., p.275.
[147] Ibid., p.283.
[148] Ibid., p.321.
[149] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, pp.153; 158; 181; 183; 196.
[150] Goebel, M. 'Fighting and Working in the Metropole. The Nationalizing Effects of the First World War throughout the French Empire, 1916-1930' , <www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Imperialism> 25 September 2014. p.101.
[151] Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, p.27.
[152] Ibid., p.116.

technology has given humankind the ability to build a controlled environment from which suffering has been eliminated, for Horkheimer and Adorno, the '… man of science knows things to the extent that he can make them ...'[153] – also for the worse.

Though materialism is '… concerned with changing the concrete conditions under which men suffer…',[154] the desire for happiness prove illusionary, since suffering in past generations cannot be wished away. Horkheimer argued that in the face of suffering as a result of wretched conditions, even materialist philosophers had to compromise social theory in the context of contemporary materialism. This meant that the struggle for a better society had to be separated from metaphysical justifications therefor. [155] In a sense then, this highlighted the tension between '… analytic Marxism with its firm commitment to rational choice theory and methodological individualism….'[156] The *praxis* went further than merely developing an economic theory of society out of purely theoretical motives, but rather from the need to *understand* contemporary society. Such understanding recognises that history has through the ages been '… a record of struggles.'[157] The reality is that humans are in conflict with themselves and as long as the irrationality of rationality prevails, senseless suffering will persist. Thus, reason cannot become reasonable as long humans act as members of an organism which in itself, lacks reason.[158] It appears then for Horkheimer, as if real suffering, as experienced by the Jews under fascism, is the highest form of suffering.[159]

Critical Theory remains relevant for history as critical social theory since neither is practiced for the sake of itself, nor do they take place in a vacuum. After all, Critical Theory for Horkheimer is, as we have mentioned above '… a theory dominated at every turn by a concern for reasonable conditions of life.'[160] This is not the place to restate the aims of early Critical Theory.

Horkheimer often said that he lived in a terrible age of ever growing suffering[161] in our worldmaking.[162] In addition, Horkheimer's concept of suffering was linked to a philosophical idea – one that has encapsulated a state of mind in '… the way the world discloses and unfolds itself.'[163] He addressed the distinction between physical and spiritual suffering as if the former is apparently worse than the latter. But how is it possible to compare the two, how can they be separated in the thought processes of humans? Some argue that material wants; physical torture; imprisonment; heavy forced

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[153] Horkheimer, M. and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, p.6.
[154] Ibid., p.32.
[155] Ibid., pp.22-26.
[156] Chandra, U. 'Marxism, Postcolonial Theory, and the Specter of Universalism.' <http.//www.academia.edu/8475067/Marxism_Postcolonial_Theory_and_the_Specter_of_Universalism>
[157] Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, p.45-46.
[158] Ibid., p.208.
[159] Horkheimer, M. 'Authority and the Family', in Horkheimer, M. *Critique of Instrumental Reason. Lectures and Essays Since the End of World War II*, pp.122-123.
[160] Horkheimer, M. 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, p.199.
[161] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, p.125.
[162] Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politics of Space and Notes on a Gated Community in South Africa.' 13 February 2014. <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers>, pp.1-27.
[163] Ferber, I. *Philosophy and Melancholy. Benjamin's Early Reflections on Theatre and Language,* pp.2-6.

labour and fatal disease, are in reality more than a person with grief. Furthermore, for Horkheimer, nervous disorders or boredom are not representative of spiritual suffering. He goes on, in the same aphorism, 'Spiritual Suffering,' to argue that it is not only the hungry and poor who suffer Junkers and managers of factories suffer as well. He argued that the more affluent they are, the more power they have and the more education they have, the more worries they have. Their worries become more than physical pain BUT the proletarians have greater anxiety – however their anxiety is far less compared to that of the wealthy. He summed it up as follows: 'The spiritual suffering of the ruling class is nothing compared to the real wretchedness of the proletariat.'[164] Bourgeois world only reflect their limited world and not the struggles that attempts to unlock it. In this regards, Perman wrote that we '… are all suffering more than we know, because much of our suffering is not clearly recognized as suffering.'[165] For some, ultimate suffering is allowed and can be terminated only by God. Whatever one thinks of or dream about the end of suffering, it refers to the afterlife: either death or resurrection which makes suffering eternal.[166]

No one-dimensional view of suffering will do. However, it starts our inability to apply human reason to our holistic existence and not for the advancement of individual or national egoism. It is the result of '… barbaric forms of social domination.'[167] There is therefore a close relationship between the understanding of prevailing suffering, an reason. That some people '… suffer more than the average member of their class'[168] is irrelevant.

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[164] Engelbrecht, C. 'The Politics of Space and Notes on a Gated Community in South Africa.' 13 February 2014. <independent.academia.edu.christoengelbrecht/papers>, p.105.

[165] Perman, M. 'Suffering in our Everyday Lives: An Introduction,' in *What's Best Next?* <whatsbestnext.com/2010/09/suffering-in-our-everyday-lives-an-introduction>

[166] Horkheimer, M. *Dawn and Decline. Notes 1926-1931* and *1950-1969*, pp.127; 150; 219.

[167] Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason,* p.86.

[168] Fromm, E. *Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought*, p.136.

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